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KEEP UP WITH OUR PARTNERS

2020 — A Year to Remember, 6 p.m.: CBS4's Dave Warren reviews the busy hurricane season

WLRN 91.3 FM
On Point, 11 a.m.: The ascendance of meritocracy and the decline of the common good, only on 91.3 WLRN

FLA. LOTTERY

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 30

Pick 2	Day: 2-9
Pick 3	Day: 1-4-3
Pick 4	Day: 6-8-5-7
Pick 5	Day: 2-6-8-8-5
Cash4Life	3-19-26-29-39 ☆ 3
Night draws	Go to flalottery.com
Fantasy 5	Go to flalottery.com
Lotto	Go to flalottery.com
Powerball	Go to flalottery.com

TUESDAY, DEC. 29

Fantasy 5: 6-17-22-24-39
Cash4Life: 12-21-23-24-36 ☆ 1
Jackpot Triple Play: 7-18-11-17-18-42
Friday's jackpot: $675,000
Mega Millions: 1-11-35-48-62 ☆ 19 (Xtra: x3)
Friday's jackpot: $491 million

MONDAY, DEC. 28

Fantasy 5: 13-18-23-24-36
Cash4Life: 17-44-55-59-69 ☆ 3

SUNDAY, DEC. 27

Fantasy 5: 1-7-24-31-36
Cash4Life: 28-35-38-42-53 ☆ 2

SATURDAY, DEC. 26

Fantasy 5: 18-19-25-29-34
Cash4Life: 2-38-42-51-58 ☆ 4
Lotto: 6-16-25-30-35-58
Wednesday's jackpot: $4.75 million
Powerball: 10-24-27-35-51 ☆ 18 (Xtra: x2)
Wednesday's jackpot: $363 million

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MIAMI HERALD EXECUTIVES
Nancy Meyer, President, 305-376-3355, nmeyer@miamiherald.com
Rick Hirsch, Interim Executive Editor, 305-376-3504, rhirsch@miamiherald.com
Nancy Ancrum, Editorial Page Editor, 305-376-3517, nancrum@miamiherald.com
Bernie Kosanke, Southeast Regional Director of Distribution, 305-376-4727, bkosanke@miamiherald.com
Jeff Sauls, Director of Operations, 305-376-4665, jsauls@miamiherald.com

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ISRAEL HAYOM AP

Jonathan Pollard and his wife, Esther, sit inside a private jet provided by American casino magnate Sheldon Adelson while en route to Israel on Wednesday.

Jonathan Pollard, who spied for Israel, gets hero's welcome from Netanyahu

BY DAVID M. HALBFINGER AND ISABEL KERSHNER
The New York Times

JERUSALEM

Jonathan J. Pollard, the American who served 30 years in prison for spying for Israel in a Cold War-era espionage case that had been a thorn in relations between the two allies, arrived in Israel early Wednesday to a carefully staged, if relatively subdued, hero's welcome from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The predawn scene unfolded with a camera rolling, as Netanyahu, who has just begun what will be a bitterly contested campaign leading to elections in March, met Pollard, who completed his parole last month, and his wife, Esther, at Ben-Gurion Airport near Tel Aviv.

The couple descended from a private jet, kissed the tarmac and recited a Jewish prayer of thanks reserved for new experiences. Netanyahu added one of his own, praising God for "releasing the bound" — though the prayer is ordinarily said upon waking to refer to freeing the worshipper from the bonds of sleep.

The prime minister then handed Pollard, who was granted Israeli citizenship in 1995 while in prison, an Israeli identification card.

"You're home," Netanyahu said.

A U.S. Navy intelligence analyst, Pollard gave a range of classified documents to Israel starting in 1984. His disclosures exposed the abilities of the American spy agencies, potentially damaged intelligence collection efforts and risked exposing secrets, CIA and Defense Department officials said in classified documents prepared after his arrest.

"We are ecstatic to be home at last after 35 years," Pollard, 66, said. "And we thank the people and the prime minister of Israel for bringing us home. No one could be prouder of his country or of this leader than we are. And we hope to become productive citizens as soon and as quickly as possible and to get on with our lives here."

The spectacle was most likely the final chapter in a long and painful saga that has irritated the Israeli-American relationship.

The jet that delivered the Pollards belonged to a casino owned by Sheldon Adelson, the Republican billionaire who is a longtime benefactor of Netanyahu's, the Israeli news media reported. Adelson, one of the world's richest men and a key supporter of President Donald Trump's, had long lobbied for Pollard's release.

After his arrest in 1985, Pollard pleaded guilty in a deal with prosecutors who agreed to seek a yearslong sentence. But the judge, relying on a once-classified damage assessment written by Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, sentenced him to life in prison. Pollard ultimately served three decades behind bars, the longest stretch in prison for an American who illegally gave material to an allied government.

In October 1987, the CIA, with Pollard's cooperation, began working on a damage assessment. Though a redacted version of the document has been made public, much remains classified. The report found that while the Israelis did not request information on American military plans or some of the most delicate topics, the "sheer quantity" of disclosures posed a risk to intelligence sources and collection methods. "Pollard's operation has few parallels among known U.S. espionage cases," the CIA report said.

Pollard was released from prison in November 2015, leaving a federal penitentiary in North Carolina to live in New York. The conditions of his parole, unsuccessfully contested by his lawyer and the Israeli government, did not allow him to travel outside the United States for five years without permission.

American national security officials had long objected to any easing of Pollard's punishment, highlighting the damage he caused to American intelligence collection. But objections from intelligence officers largely became muted over time, with some acknowledging that Pollard had paid his debt.

In Israel, Pollard's case became a cause célèbre of some on the right wing.

But others saw him with more jaundiced eyes, noting that he had sold American secrets for large sums of money. And others faulted him for having created enormous problems for Jews in the U.S. government who felt that their loyalties had been suddenly called into question.

'Grim' virus discoveries in Colorado and California alarm scientists

BY APOORVA MANDAVILLI
The New York Times

A contagious variant of the coronavirus spreading through Britain has left that nation grappling with new lockdowns, curtailed air travel and a surge in infections. Now, the same variant has appeared in Colorado and California.

Scientists are unsure how widely the new variant has spread in the United States, but they concur the extent of its spread will color virtually every aspect of the nation's pandemic response: hospital treatment, community lockdowns, school closures and more.

A pathogen that spreads easily is more difficult to contain, and a greater percentage of the population must be inoculated to turn back the pandemic. Yet even as the variant surfaced in the United States, Trump administration officials acknowledged Wednesday that the vaccine rollout was going too slowly. Just 2.1 million people had received their first dose as of Monday morning, far short of the 20 million goal.

The new variant, called B.1.1.7, is not thought to be more deadly than previous variants, nor does it seem to cause more severe illness. Current vaccines are likely to be effective against it.

Gov. Gavin Newsom of California announced Wednesday that a case of the new variant had been identified in San Diego County, but he did not provide additional details.

Officials in Colorado confirmed one case and identified a second suspected case. Both men are in the National Guard assigned to a nursing home in Simla, Colorado, southeast of Denver.

Officials at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Wednesday that they were working with state laboratories in California, Delaware and Maryland to analyze patient samples for infection with the new variant.

The number of people hospitalized for COVID-19 daily has been rising relentlessly since October, totaling nearly 125,000 on Wednesday. That number is expected to swell as a result of family gatherings over the holidays.

People infected with the new variant may need different care than earlier coronavirus patients, further burdening the health care system, experts said.

The arrival of the variant also ramps up the urgency to get Americans vaccinated, because the more contagious the virus is, the greater the percentage of people who must be inoculated to contain the threat. That threshold may be 90% now, versus the 70% experts previously estimated.

Ghislaine Maxwell's 'lack of candor' doomed second bid for bail

BY STEPHEN REX BROWN
New York Daily News

NEW YORK

Ghislaine Maxwell has not been "fully candid about her financial situation" and her attempts at deception have become more obvious since her arrest, a judge wrote in a decision made public Wednesday.

Judge Alison Nathan denied the British socialite's second bid for bail this week. The judge detailed her reasoning in an unsealed, Manhattan Federal Court decision noting Maxwell claimed after her arrest to have $3.5 million in assets. Maxwell failed to mention she brought $20 million to her marriage in 2016. She had since transferred millions to her hubby through a trust — another key detail that Maxwell failed to tell authorities.

"The evidence of a lack of candor is, if anything, stronger now than in July 2020, as it is clear to the Court that the Defendant's representations ... were woefully incomplete," Nathan wrote. "That lack of candor raises significant concerns as to whether the Court has now been provided a full and accurate picture of her finances and as to the Defendant's willingness to abide by any set of conditions of release."

Maxwell revealed the new details about her wealth in her bid for $28.5 million bail while awaiting trial on charges of grooming Jeffrey Epstein's victims for sexual abuse in the mid-1990s. Nathan, who had already denied an earlier bail request, was unpersuaded by Maxwell's second proposal.

It was unlikely, the judge wrote, that Maxwell's initial misleading statements about money were "the result of the Defendant's misestimation rather than misdirection."

The court also had doubts about Maxwell's marriage, which the British socialite touted as evidence that she would stay in the U.S. to face justice. But after her arrest at a $1 million New Hampshire estate, Maxwell claimed she was in the process of getting a divorce.

"The Defendant now argues that her newly revealed relationship with her spouse signals her deep affective ties in the country, but at the time she was arrested, she was not living with him and claimed to be getting divorced. Indeed, she does not propose to live with him were she to be released on bail, undercutting her argument that that relationship would create an insurmountable burden to her fleeing," Nathan wrote.

ROB KIM Getty Images/TNS, file 2016

Ghislaine Maxwell is accused of grooming Jeffrey Epstein's victims for sexual abuse in the mid-1990s.

Sen. Josh Hawley answers Trump's call for election challenge

WASHINGTON

Josh Hawley became the first senator on Wednesday to take up President Donald Trump's demand that lawmakers challenge the results of the 2020 election, saying he would object to Congress' certification of the Electoral College results on Jan. 6.

The move by Hawley, R-Mo., is unlikely to alter the outcome of the election, but it will force Republicans to publicly affirm President-elect Joe Biden's victory in a politically fraught test of loyalty to Trump.

Hawley, an ambitious freshman senator, framed the objection as "an effort to highlight the failure" of states "to follow their own election laws as well as the unprecedented interference of Big Tech monopolies in the election." He did not repeat the president's false claim of widespread voter fraud.

"Millions of voters concerned about election integrity deserve to be heard," Hawley said in statement. "I will object on Jan. 6 on their behalf."

The decision ensures that the certification process, typically a formality, will instead become a debate on the House and Senate floors, elevating Trump's repeated false assertions.

The objection will force the Senate to debate Hawley's claim for up to two hours, followed by a vote affirming Biden's victory. Rejecting the challenge requires a simple majority vote. For Congress to sustain Hawley's opposition, both chambers would have to do so, a virtual impossibility given that Democrats control the House.

Hawley

The parallel effort in the House is being led by Rep. Mo Brooks, R-Ala.

Hawley, who swept into Washington in 2019 after defeating the incumbent Democrat, Claire McCaskill, is widely considered a potential contender for the 2024 presidential election.

"This is how you run for president on the Republican side in 2024," said Sen. Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota, the top Democrat on the committee that oversees the certification process. "You join a coup attempt. Democracy will prevail."

— THE NEW YORK TIMES

Louisiana Congressman-elect Luke Letlow dies from COVID-19

BATON ROUGE, LA.

The death of a newly elected U.S. representative from Louisiana of complications related to COVID-19 stunned the state's political circles Wednesday.

Luke Letlow, who was only 41 and had no known underlying health conditions, died Tuesday night at Ochsner-LSU Health Shreveport — days before he was scheduled to be sworn into office, according to his spokesman Andrew Bautsch.

Republican U.S. Sen. Bill Cassidy, a doctor who tested positive for the coronavirus this year and has recovered, seemed almost at a loss for words in a Twitter video he posted Tuesday night about Letlow's death, stopping at one point before saying: "It just, just, just, just brings home COVID can kill. For most folks it doesn't, but it truly can. So, as you remember Luke, his widow, his [two] children in your prayers, remember as well to be careful with COVID."

The congressman-elect had been inconsistent in his precautions against the coronavirus, though he acknowledged the severity of COVID-19 and said in a debate that he personally knew people who had died from the disease.

Letlow

Gov. John Bel Edwards intends to call a March special election to fill the congressional seat, according to his spokeswoman, Christina Stephens.

— ASSOCIATED PRESS

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